

## **2019 Open Lands Work Plan Comments**

**NOTE: Each bullet represents a new person making comments.**

### **OBJECTIVE SECTION – FOREST MANAGEMENT**

- None.

### **OBJECTIVE SECTION– PROPERTY ACQUISITION/EXCHANGE**

- None.

### **OBJECTIVE SECTION – WEED MANAGEMENT**

- I like grapes.

### **OBJECTIVE SECTION – TRAILS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT**

- Please consider keeping the Davis Gulch bike jumps. They are a fun part of our trail system and have allowed numerous riders to progress their riding ability.
- The Davis gulch jumps are a staple in many locals lives, we progress our skills on a mountain bike there. Much of the community already maintains them and they are greatly used. Please consider not disassembling them
- We should keep the Davis gulch jumps.
- I disagree with demolishing the jumps in Davis Gulch. This is a very high traffic area and it's unclear what the benefit of reclaiming that small zone would be. Compared to other trail systems.
- Helena has very limited space set aside specifically for mtb skills development. Kids especially love these jumps- it seems unnecessary and a waste of time and money to bulldoze them.
- The trails at Davis Gulch with the jumps are epic and should stay.
- The jumps in Davis Gulch should stay. They provide fun experiences for people who bike, and aren't really affecting anything.
- Davis Jumps shouldn't be demolished.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - Can City Staff please give further explanation of the purpose of this fencing project? Is it to prevent trespass? In general, it would be helpful to have just a brief explanation of the purpose of a project where it is not clear. Thanks.

- “Install approximately 2,000 feet of post and rail fencing on the western & southern borders of the SW ¼, Section 31, T. 10 N., R. 03 W., Lewis & Clark County, MT & the eastern side of the Little Moab Trail in the N1/2NE1/4SW1/4, Section 31, T. 10 N., R. 03 W., Lewis & Clark County, MT”
  - Helena Hikes representatives met with Craig Marr, Brad Langsather, and Mayor Collins on February 20, 2019, to request that City staff, representatives from the Montana Bicycle Guild, Prickly Pear Land Trust, and Helena Hikes meet at the Directional Trail on Mt. Ascension as early as possible this spring to discuss completion of the DT and its trail connections for sessioning, and potential mitigations for hikers. Mayor Collins encouraged this approach and Commissioner Noonan requested it at the November 28, 2018, final public meeting where the DT was approved. Helena Hikes would appreciate this on-site exchange of ideas, and has submitted its written suggestions for trail mitigation to MBG, PPLT, and the City for consideration.
  - Helena Hikes requests the City/PPLT add a trail maintenance project to address extreme rutting leading to and from the meadows in the Wakina Sky area. The trails are now so narrow and rutted that it is difficult to hike the trails leading in all directions from the meadows, as well as the Dazed and Confused trail switch-backing to the east, leading back to Grizzly Gulch road.
  - It seems like it may be premature to fence the DeFord trail area and remove the social obstacle course until the bike skills proposal can be vetted through the trails plan update process. We believe this is another project that deserves full public scrutiny and incorporation of a variety of ideas before it is implemented. It is possible that the City could invest considerable money in the endeavors proposed for 2019, only to find that alternative treatments are more optimal. Could this potentially be delayed until the trails update can vet the alternatives?
  - Related to this project, and something that could address a more immediate need, is rehabilitation of the “highmarking” caused by off-trail bike use that is taking place both in the immediate area of the bike skills course and further north near the DeFord Trailhead. Anchored, hardened deterrents are probably warranted to prevent natural resource damage from irresponsible users. Highmarking is also beginning to occur on the Waterline Trail.
  - Just curious: Why do trail-user data collection just at the Beattie St. trailhead? What prompted this project? Again, a brief explanation of the purpose of the project would be really helpful. Thanks.
  - We’ve heard discussion about two additional projects and wonder if they are still being proposed and should be included in the 2019 Workplan. One is the improvement of the Park City trailhead, proposed and funded by Narrate Church, with the improvements constructed by the City staff? And the second is a proposed ADA trail from the Mt. Helena Trailhead parking lot to Daisy Hill, proposed by MBG? Are these still in the works?
  - Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
- I oppose the city of Helena's Draft 2019 Open Lands Work plan that affects the biking community. Kids and adults alike (mostly kids) enjoying these jumps that are safely located outside of the main trail area causing harm to no one. Trails and features are for everyone!!!
  - The following is one comment with several points:

- There has recently been quite a bit of attention on the need for a more robust public involvement process from the City Commission, Ana Cortez (City Manager), and the public, the Work Plan does not include a public outreach objective. Since these efforts require a commitment of City resources, it should be included in the Work Plan.
- The Work Plan does not include an objective related to the formation and function of HOLTAC and its efforts to accommodate a broader public outreach effort. Again, this effort will require City resources and should be included in the Work Plan.
- Regarding the Beattie Street trailhead - the last stated objective in the work plan.... Why is trailuser data collection being limited to the Beattie St. trailhead? What prompted this project? A brief explanation of the purpose of the project would be really helpful. Since the Beattie Street trailhead expansion was never vetted with the local community, there continues to be a perception that the user count is an effort to justify a parking lot/event center primarily for the benefit of the cycling interest. Of course, the existence of a parking area at this trailhead naturally attracts more users than at other access points. There are currently, however, differing opinions about whether the goal should be to encourage dispersed access along the urban/open space interface, or to target specific access points for expansion in existing neighborhoods. This requires a more comprehensive, inclusive, proactive, discussion with local communities to determine best options for both the land and the community. Decisions regarding preferred alternatives should reasonably emerge from this process and would result in wider acceptance.
- I strongly support the retention and maintenance of the Davis Gulch skills course and jump line. This area can be improved but should not be removed. The area does not impact hikers or dog walkers, it is an outlet for skill building in the mountain bike community and help alleviate rogue building of jumps on the normal trail system. Please keep the skills course!
- Support the plan to install rolling drain dips; suggest these be constructed as described on page 28 of "Montana Forestry Best Management Practices". Support the other Trail Improvement Objectives to repair surface tread and manage erosion.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - Under Misc tasks the following is tasked to HOLMAC, "Complete trail user counts, using electronic tally devices (Infrared & mountain bike), at the South Beattie Street Trailhead. Compile collected data and deliver an annual report (Trail Counter Report) that includes chronological line charts depicting monthly use organized by type (foot, bicycle), and trailhead. The delivered report shall include a narrative that outlines methodology, assumptions and any data irregularities that may have been noted."
  - Is this the only data collected by HOLMAC this next year? Is it useful if we also don't collect data at other locations to compare if we have an increase in uses all over the Helena trail system? It seems that the goals for collecting this data may be important to include in the work plan in order to see if that is the best method in which to use that data. Perhaps it's included in another City plan, but clarity here is necessary also.

- I strongly support maintaining the Davis Gulch skills course and jump line. This area should be highly considered for improvement projects that will enhance the opportunity for bike skills building. The area is a great location for youth and adults to improve on their bike skills. I actively volunteer for city trail work days every summer and have spent more time removing trail from our system then adding. I have understood the reasons for past trail removal projects that I've helped with, but feel this is an unnecessary effort to remove the skills course and jump line. I would much rather see the money allocated for removing the trails put towards improving the skills course and jump line. Please keep the skills course and jump line so we can as a community improve upon them and my children and myself can enjoy them for years to come.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - Page 3, Trail Improvement, bullet 2: “mechanically install rolling drainage dips with a skid steer machine on road sections of the Eagle Scout, Easy Rider, Meat Loaf & Catch Up trails”. Has a skid steer always been routinely used for trail maintenance activities? Heavy equipment is becoming more common place as a tool for trail maintenance (e.g. the downhill trail construction) which in general creates a larger disturbance and loss of natural character, then requires more reclamation.
  - Page 6, Ambrose, item 3: “Excavate and remove tree stumps”. Same comment I made previously about excavation equipment in open space. Also, who are tree stumps a hazard for?
  - Page 7, Miscellaneous Tasks, bullet 2: “Complete trail user counts, using electronic tally devices, at Beattie Street trailhead. This is suspicious. In past years trail counters have moved between trail heads to get a sense of overall use, putting one just at Beattie Street comes off as again trying to justify the unnecessary and costly parking lot development being used to promote bike tourism interests ahead of neighborhood concerns. One major issue with trail counters is they do not consider the number of users who walk or ride to a trailhead versus those who drive there, and can (and have been) misconstrued to exaggerate use.
- I would love to see another disc golf (folf) course in Helena, perhaps on the west side of town. Ideally, the course would be complete with concrete pads, permanent signage and professional baskets. These courses are minimally invasive and get people outdoors, hiking with a purpose, and its family friendly as well!
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - As many others have said the jumps being removed sounds like a terrible idea. It would be nice to know the thought process behind including this so we can speak to the reasoning. Personally I rode these once and quickly learned it was beyond my current skill level so I went back to the skills park to practice more.
  - I would strongly support rebuilding the area to provide clear progression options with signage to help users to build their skills in a safe way.



## **OBJECTIVE SECTION – FACILITIES**

- It is gratifying to see the trail, viewing platform, and installation of informational signs in the 2019 Helena Open Lands Work Plan. The signs have been completed and the draft design was provided by volunteers and funded by private donations. A bench on the platform needs to be included in the work plan and a Trex surface would be preferable for the viewing platform. Access to the trail and viewing area will be handicapped/wheelchair accessible. The remaining private donations intended to contribute to this project will be made available to the City upon completion of the work. Thanks to Parks Dept. staff for their work on many aspects of this Wetlands Park.
- I fully support the development of a trail and platform, bench and railing, and installation of interpretive panels in the Charles van Hook Wetland. This project involved private landowners, the City of Helena Parks Department, Montana Audubon, Prickly Pear Land Trust, funding from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust and several private donations, and lots of hard work by all. This is a great example of working in partnership. I would like to see a more permanent platform (i.e. Trex) than the crushed granite.
- I agree with the installation of information kiosks for the wetlands and disc golf areas. More information at trailhead areas is always welcome.
- I support the access trail, informational signage, and platform construction at the Van Hook Wetlands. Thank you for including this project in the workplan. Additionally, I support the installation of the two-four disc golf holes and informational kiosk near the Donaldson Property. I am pleased to see the City of Helena adding two projects providing additional diversity for recreational options in our town.
- Page 2, Facilities, bullet 3, “facilitate the installation of two-four disc golf holes by Disc Golf Helena”. I was at the HOLMAC meeting where this option was proposed and the representative for Disc Golf Helena made some good points about current use, enthusiasm for, and needs of the current course. I still wonder what the down-side to expanding this area could be and believe it warrants further discussion. Has anyone done an inventory of the current state of the plant understory in this area, weed outbreaks, and quantity of dog feces? I got the impression that the disc golf community has in the past been adamant about trash pickup.
- Bullet 3 & 4: I support the addition of new disc golf holes and a kiosk on the Donaldson property. Thank you City of Helena for providing this awesome park.

## **OBJECTIVE SECTION – FENCE CONSTRUCTION AND REMOVAL**

- Regarding the plan to remove the bike pumps off DeFord trail on Davis Gulch, I believe that this plan is very short sighted. The first picture that appears on the helenamt.com website shows a picture of a mountain biker and reads "IMBA ride center. Helena, Montana: Hero dirt, free shuttles, single-track and craft beer." Mountain biking is advertised in several other sections of your website as well. Clearly, the tourism and community benefits of mountain biking are evident and embraced by both the city and its residents. We are so fortunate to have the support of the city for their previous support of our world class trail system and for the opportunities allowed such as the trail rider, vigilante bike bark as well as the recent construction of directional trails. These jumps provide opportunities for riders to safely progress their skills and accommodate a wide range of abilities. Areas such as the jump/skills course and

directional trails will reduce traffic from shared trails, reducing potential user conflicts. Having dedicated jump lines also reduces potential for unauthorized trail building in our community. I respectfully ask the city to reconsider this proposal and look at the long-term benefits of these jumps for our community. However, if any work is to be done to this area, I would support regular maintenance and improvement of these jumps to ensure safety of jumps and landings by volunteer groups, as well as signage near the top of the jump lines indicating warnings and their purpose.

- Pertaining to the removal and fencing of the Davis Street bike jumps next to the Deford Trail, I am a bit confused. It was my understanding that the city along with PPLT wanted to improve the jumps portion of the trail and in fact PPLT had received a grant to proceed with this work, and now we are talking about fencing it off and removing. Which leads me to my only real question, is what then has happened with the grant funding that was made available for this and why the 180 degree shift from improvement to removal. Helena has a fantastic trail system that is really tailored more toward hiking than mountain bike use. That being said I am an avid trail user, both hiking and biking, I find it hard to understand why we would want to remove any of the trail system. I believe that more we can promote trails new trails as well as improved trails the better the impact for ALL trail users.
- What is the purpose of the fencing near the Little Moab Trail? Will it be constructed at a property boundary? Section referenced: "Install approximately 2,000 feet of post and rail fencing on the western & southern borders of the SW ¼, Section 31, T. 10 N., R. 03 W., Lewis & Clark County, MT & the eastern side of the Little Moab Trail in the N1/2NE1/4SW1/4, Section 31, T. 10 N., R. 03 W., Lewis & Clark County, MT".
- I support the construction of the fencing on the eastern side of Little Moab if it will clearly designate where private property exists so intentional or unintentional trespassing eliminated.

## **OBJECTIVE SECTION – BOUNDARY IDENTIFICATION**

- None.

## **OBJECTIVE SECTION – RECLAMATION**

- I oppose the removal of the Davis Street bike jumps. These jumps provide an opportunity for skill development for both youth and adult bikers and, due to their location off the main trail, have no impact on the greater trail use community. Further, the use of city funds to remove these features is appalling when there are so many other important trail maintenance projects that compete for maintenance dollars. I am disappointed that there are groups in Helena that seek to divide and exclude recreation types that they do not participate in or agree with. Helena trails are for all users and this means having some areas that are developed for a particular user group. This is an ideal spot for this type of activity and I support further development and improvement of this bike skills area. The demand for these types of features is only going to increase as the City of Helena grows. Forward thinking development and cooperation with user groups will ensure that these types of features are developed safely and legally in appropriate areas.
- Relating to the 3rd reclamation bullet point: Please do not remove the earthen jumps referenced therein. Although I'm too old and brittle to hit most of the jumps, I still have fun on them. I also see and know lots of other people who really enjoy them. If anything, the Helena mountain biking trail system has too few

features such as these. We should be adding to these features (or at least allowing them), not destroying them.

- Please do not install fence and remove the bike jumps along the DeFord Trail. I frequently see adults and kids using these features and having a lot of fun. They are located safely outside of the main trail area and therefore do not interfere with any other users of the DeFord Trail. Helena trails are for everyone and some users want and enjoy bike jumps/features. This is a wholly unnecessary step, and the money for this project could be put to better use elsewhere in the Helena open lands. Improvements to that area to ensure there are no adverse interactions between people on the jumps and those on the main trail could be beneficial, but please reconsider the current proposal because it is not an improvement to our trail system. Thank you.
- Regarding the elimination of earthen bike jumps located adjacent to DeFord Trail. I believe this is unnecessary and diminishes from the Helena trail system for two main reasons: 1. The Helena trail system, while great, have very limited features like these anywhere in the network, therefore losing them would diminish the overall network. 2. (most importantly) the features are off the trail. The main trail stays above these jump features, and it is very obvious where the main trail is verses the jumps. This eliminates people accidentally coming upon these jumps. Being off the trail as they are, makes them in a perfect location.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - Under the Reclamation section, there is a proposal to “Install post and rail fencing along that portion of the DeFord Trail situated below the Archery Range access road and immediately adjacent to several unauthorized earthen bike jumps located just east of the Dry Gulch draw bottom. Machine level the earthen jumps with a skid steer to discourage further development/use and seed disturbed areas with one or more of the aforementioned native grass seed species.”
  - Given the number of unauthorized jumps that have been appearing in various locations along the Ridge Trail and in the Rodney Ridge area over the past 2-years, it seems short sided to remove, regrade, and revegetate the area noted above. This type of riding is clearly wanted. These features are established and provide riding opportunities that are in demand. It concerns me that if you remove this area, people will build other bike-unauthorized jumps disturbing additional land. Also this area provides features unique to the Helena system, in that, they are easily accessible to most any rider or any ability. The area provides enjoyment for novice and experienced riders alike. If the City's concern with this area is safety, is there a way to make mountain biking and hiking completely safe without removing every obstacle? Thanks for consideration.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - I was shocked and saddened to see that the City of Helena's work plan included a proposal to install fencing and obliterate the bike jumps located in the Dry Gulch draw bottom. I am adamantly opposed to this completely unnecessary proposal and request that it be removed from the City's work plan.



- Those bike jumps are frequently used by kids (primarily) and adults, and add a sorely missing element to our Helena trail system. They are situated in a safe area off the primary trail which is the perfect configuration for features like this as that layout prevents trail user conflict. Helena is a biking community (this is not going to change no matter what the grumpy old NIMBY's may desire), and as such we need to have MORE not less options for progressive biking features like the very reasonable jumps that exist today.
- After the recent (completely unnecessary) fiasco over the already-built Mt. Ascension bike trails, the City should be focusing on improving positive trail user relationships and trust within the community. If the City moves forward with the plan to obliterate the existing bike jumps they will be adding fuel to the fire and will be actively encouraging further user conflict and rogue trail building in the area.
- We have a great trail community in Helena where all different types of user groups get along - don't let the grumpy old NIMBY's convince you otherwise. Please remove this item from the City's work plan.
- To "install post and rail fencing along that portion of the DeFord Trail situated below the Archery Range access road and immediately adjacent to several unauthorized earthen bike jumps located just east of the Dry Gulch draw bottom" can be thought not as an "unauthorized earthen bike jumps" section, but as a skills section safe alternative (it gets us out of high traffic areas to practice) for bikers and additionally, a slowing point for many bikers that would probably pick up speed if this section of interest were not in place. Note: speed is acquired from this section as it quickly slopes downward, thus the force of gravity pulls the cyclist (biker) faster. This section of jumps has been around for many years and used by many. To not alternately provide an informed counter-plan to this area that has the intent from others to be leveled shows a lack of alternate critical thinking of how to best identify an area of contention. This area could be marked with signs and "authorized" as an enhancement and addition to the town of Helena. To reclaim this area should have a cost/price analysis study on the actual true impact that it imposes to others, but more importantly, the cost to level it, properly disperse the dirt materials, bring in top soil and then plant seed. Compare this operation to a simple sign designating the area where a sign costs "\$75.00." The money saved from NOT leveling this area could fortify additional signage in other areas, provide greater pest control and basically show everyone that Helena has it all: trails, trail diversity, open space etc with a level of fun not found in other towns.. I provide this comment as an avid runner, nordic skier, multi-sport cyclist, hiker, alpine skier and longtime user and builder-helper of trails. I've watched kids ride these jumps while their parents stand above and cheer. I've practiced on these jumps to become a better mountain biker on the main trails where my skills have been enhanced and bettered not on high traffic trails, but off to the side in a safe area away from others. These jumps help people become more aware of inclines and declines and helps beginning cyclists/bikers/riders become safer, more instinctual riders. Before we level something or pose the idea, let's first take a full spectrum look at the true value that this area brings, evaluate the cost and determine alternate outcomes. Let's then provide these alternate thoughts to the plan and weigh it all. Thank you for allowing an area to comment and for the great proposal. Excellent work.
- The work plan calls for removal of the bike dirt jumps adjacent to the Deford trail and Davis Gulch Road: "Machine level the earthen jumps with a skid steer to discourage further development/use..." These dirt jumps have been in place since before I started biking here over 20 years ago. This dirt jump area is an extension of the Davis Gulch Bike Course and should be formalized as part of that trail. PPLT has applied

for and received a grant to improve this bike course area and the funds need to be spent to improve it. We need to recognize the biking need for diversification of the trails and the increased economic impact a better trail system will bring to our community. The positive impacts of maintaining and formalizing this dirt jumps trail will improve the trail user experience for everyone by providing an outlet for bikers that want this type of experience.

- The following is one comment with several points:
  - I am writing to object to the removal of the dirt jumps that are located between the DeFord trail and Davis Gulch Road. This is the perfect place for this type of activity and I've always thought it would be improved further (from the corner of Dry Gulch where a sign was installed, all the way down to the north end of the DeFord Trail).
  - It's the perfect place for kids to learn new skills and get some exercise while it's also accessible and in a place parents can easily check on their kids. There are also no residents nearby to disturb. Many places aren't so lucky to have a location so desirable. In Seattle for example, they had to find some unused land under an interchange.
  - For adults looking at this area, it may be hard to visualize how important this area is to young kids, but kids love the challenge and will spend hours playing here. I know a son and daughter along with their friends who spent countless hours playing on these jumps. I'll also occasionally try them as I head back to town instead of rolling down the DeFord trail. They help my skills when I do.
  - Similar to the study that found mountain biking an important sport in breaking gender norms and increasing confidence in young girls (see link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/2019/03/14/well/mind/building-grit-in-girlsthrough-mountain-biking.amp.html>), these features do the same for both boys and girls.
  - There is no reason to spend money to demolish them, if any money is to be spent, it should be spent on improving them. I heard a grant was actually available but may not have been acted upon to do so. Regardless, they are important and should not be demolished.
  - Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
- Although I agree that the unauthorized development of jumps in the Dry Gulch bottom North of the archery range needs to be dealt with for many reasons. I think instead of leveling the jumps, it could be better to instead authorize the area as a bike park zone and alternatively officially develop the area. One idea would be to create a dual slalom race course. Leveling the jumps will not only create conflict with the jump users, but would not prevent people from rebuilding them again in the future (possibly vandalizing the fence as well). The unauthorized development of the jumps shows that there are trail users that value that method of recreation and the City should foster that use instead of shutting it down.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - Much has already been said in comments available to public viewing about the 2019 Work Plan's short-sighted proposal to demolish the bike jumps adjacent to the DeFord trail. I similarly share

the belief emphasized in those comments which explain why this idea/proposal by the City of Helena is a waste of resources and would be a poor land management decision.

- In short, those jumps are: (a) in a perfect location since they are visible from the road and out of the way from any possible interaction with other trail users; (b) provide a great outlet for many people in our community; (c) by concentrating this type of activity to certain particular areas, it actually helps to discourage further development of rogue jumps elsewhere on public lands; and (d) those jumps should be viewed as a benefit to the overall trail system and not as some sort of burden or liability that should be obliterated with short-sighted haste.
- Based on my understanding of what the City's previous plans were with respect to that area, the current proposal to demolish those jumps appears to be a complete 180 from what the City had previously planned to do. At the same time, I also understand that PPLT applied for and was awarded a grant so that it could use those donated funds to improve the existing jumps, make the area safer by working through and contracting with professional trail builders to work on the project, provide signage, etc. I am unsure how we went from trying to improve upon this beneficial resource to then making a proposal to demolish those jumps. Regardless of what may have happened to that grant funding, I strongly urge the City to remove this proposed reclamation project from its 2019 Work Plan and instead continue efforts to improve those jumps. If additional grant funding is required or a different organization is needed to help complete the improvement project, then the Montana Bicycle Guild would be more than willing to step in and lead this effort.
- The following is one comment with several points:
  - Please do not remove or destroy the bike jumps at the base of the Dry Gulch draw. Our understanding is that there was already a previous plan to develop these into a series of flow trails/jumps with a grant that was awarded. Please confirm when that will be completed and retain the current jumps until that work is completed. This is an ideal location for flow-type pump track trails with gradually increasing size/ability areas. Please make this a priority to retain as is, until the professional company who provided a quote is hired.
  - "Install post and rail fencing along that portion of the DeFord Trail situated below the Archery Range access road and immediately adjacent to several unauthorized earthen bike jumps located just east of the Dry Gulch draw bottom. Machine level the earthen jumps with a skid steer to discourage further development/use and seed disturbed areas with one or more of the aforementioned native grass seed species."
- Please keep the Davis/Dry Gulch bike jumps open and do not fence them. If anything, they should be further developed/improved upon as there are very few progressive trail features like this in Helena and they are in a great location where there is no conflict between bike and pedestrian traffic.
- Please keep the Davis/Dry Gulch bike jumps open and without the restrictions of a fence. If anything instead of restricting the progressive trails, I encourage the thought/action of improving/developing these features as they are one of the few trials features Helena has to offer. The bike jumps are located in an ideal spot for a symbiotic relationship between bikers and pedestrians traffic.

- I do not support leveling the earthen bike jumps adjacent to the DeFord Trail. While unauthorized, many youth have spent hours building and recreating on these. It would be a better idea to integrate these formally into our trail system and harness the energy of the folks working on these to contribute to their design.
- Page 3, Reclamation, bullet 3: reclaim the bike jumps and install rail fence. While I agree that after the controversial downhill trail project there needs to be a greater community conversation regarding the cumulative impacts of all the bike features in our trail system, this doesn't seem like the way to do it. I get the impression from reading the other responses on this site that the mountain bike community was not consulted (or anyone else) prior to adding this task. Something should be done about the eroded high marks occurring along the woodchip trail which was probably the impetus for the rail fence.
- I oppose the removal of the Dry Gulch jump line and installation of the fencing in that area. The location does not disturb other trail users and is easy to monitor with its proximity to the road. However I do feel like unauthorized digging should be discouraged via signage to ensure features continue to be safe and well made by experienced personnel. Having frequented the City of Ogden, Utah bike park I can attest that if properly developed and maintained a jump/skills area is a great asset to the community allowing riders to develop skills beyond riding the same old trails over and over again. Moreover areas like the aforementioned jump line motivates kids to get out and be active more so than a simple ride in the woods would. Let's make this even more of an asset than it already has been to our growing mountain biking community.

## **GENERAL OVERALL COMMENTS**

- I ride the Davis jumps all the time. They are safe, fun, and out of the way of hiking trails. They do not need to be expanded upon and they shouldn't be demolished just because money wasn't used to expand them. Please keep our only fun jumps in Helena.
- I oppose the city of Helena's Draft 2019 Open Lands Work plan that affects the biking community. Kids and adults alike (mostly kids) enjoying these jumps that are safely located outside of the main trail area causing harm to no one. Trails and features are for everyone!!!
- There has recently been quite a bit of attention on the need for a more robust public involvement process from the City Commission, Ana Cortez (City Manager), and the public, the Work Plan does not include a public outreach objective. Since these efforts require a commitment of City resources, it should be included in the Work Plan. I also support all comments submitted by the Helena Hikes group.
- Thanks for everything you do and for the chance to have input!
- Overall the work plan is simple and should provide adequate direction for work to be done on city open lands. I think this might be outside the scope of the "work plan" but I would like to see detail on how commercial recreation will be managed on City Open Lands. Example: the "Trail Rider". The management and special use permits for organized entities wishing to use the City Public Lands should be outlined and examined to see if it should be allowed or not and if the benefits of something like the Trail Rider for example, outweigh the negative impacts associated.
- Strongly oppose the work plan description to fence off and obliterate the jump/skills section below the Archery Range in the Dry Gulch bottom. This section of trails has been in place for many many years and is one of the few portions of the Helena trail system that allows this type of riding. It is ideally located in an area where no other traffic conflicts with this use and the motives for the destruction of this area is questionable. The jump/skills area is utilized primarily by kids and is a fantastic outlet for youthful enthusiasm; I wonder how the kids who utilize this infrastructure would view the wonton destruction of their beloved skills park by the city who is supposed to serve them. This section of the trail system should be viewed as an asset for the city instead of a potential liability.
- The City of Helena and PPLT should continue to focus on servicing multiple use on its trail system and not prioritize (or even APPEAR to prioritize) one user group over another user group. There is perception in the community that bikers are being marginalized for the sake of foot traffic and this is a disappointing state of affairs. Bikers bring advocacy, interest, volunteer labor, enthusiasm, a wide variety of users, new visitors to the area, and money (think economic driver). Bikers have put Helena on the map and gained it international recognition. Foot traffic established the trail system and cemented the landscape in the psyche of the community. Neither user group should be marginalized but those who operate in the fringes of these groups seem to generate the most controversy; bikers who conflict with foot traffic and hikers who seek to limit/diminish mtn bike use should not be considered the norm; seek to service the median users, not the noisy outliers.
- Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft plan. It was nice to see the number of bullet items that included conducting outreach and engaging volunteer organizations to assist with projects. My recommendations are as follows: 1) Hold off on all land use changes (disc golf course, Davis St

reclamation) and mechanical trail maintenance (Eagle Scout, Easy Rider, Meat Loaf, Catch Up, and Ambrose trails) until the City implements the Environmental Assessment (EA) process and completes the rewrite of the 2004 Open Lands Management Plan under the supervision of a permanent Parks and Open Lands Director. 2) Move counters between all the Mount Ascension area access points to get a more accurate and holistic understanding of dispersed use throughout the trail system.